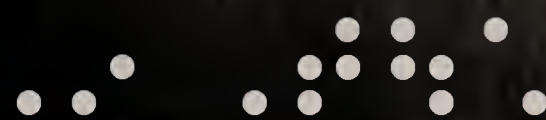




In Touch



Newsletter by Employees, for Employees
of the American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

July · August, 2003

Communications Department Improves Efficiency

Brian Dougherty, *Communications*

Let's look in on a hypothetical project team – Heckle, Deckle, Jeckle and Meckle. Hmm ... It doesn't seem to be going very well. Jeckle's frustrated. All Heckle wants to do is think about things! And Heckle's mad. Jeckle never waits and just jumps right in! Now Meckle's worried. No one on the team seems concerned that what they're working on is going to hurt some feelings. And Deckle's confused with the other three. He sees what they need to do to get back on track, but no one else is listening to him. Don't they see it? Oh my, what a mess...

Colored charts on the door, name tags with weird names like "Maximizer" and "Empathy," and all this talk about strengths. So what's been going on in Communications these days? It's really pretty simple. The department is participating in a program to improve its efficiency.

The APH Communications Department serves more than 40 in-house clients. The department helps create effective design solutions for promoting and producing APH products and services for print, accessible media and the Web.

The first step in this efficiency program required the department members to complete the StrengthsFinder assessment (www.strengthsfinder.com). The assessment identified five signature strengths unique to each person. Next, they read the book *Simplicity* by Bill Jensen which gave the group insight on work flow management and efficiency. Finally, they



*Communications Department staff (l-r) **Brian Dougherty**, **Bridgett Johnson** (Bisig Impact Group), **Scott Blome**, **Malcolm Turner**, **Becki Moody** and **Bernie Mudd**.*

met for a day – away from APH – to discover how their strengths complement each other as a team and how to better focus their time and energy.

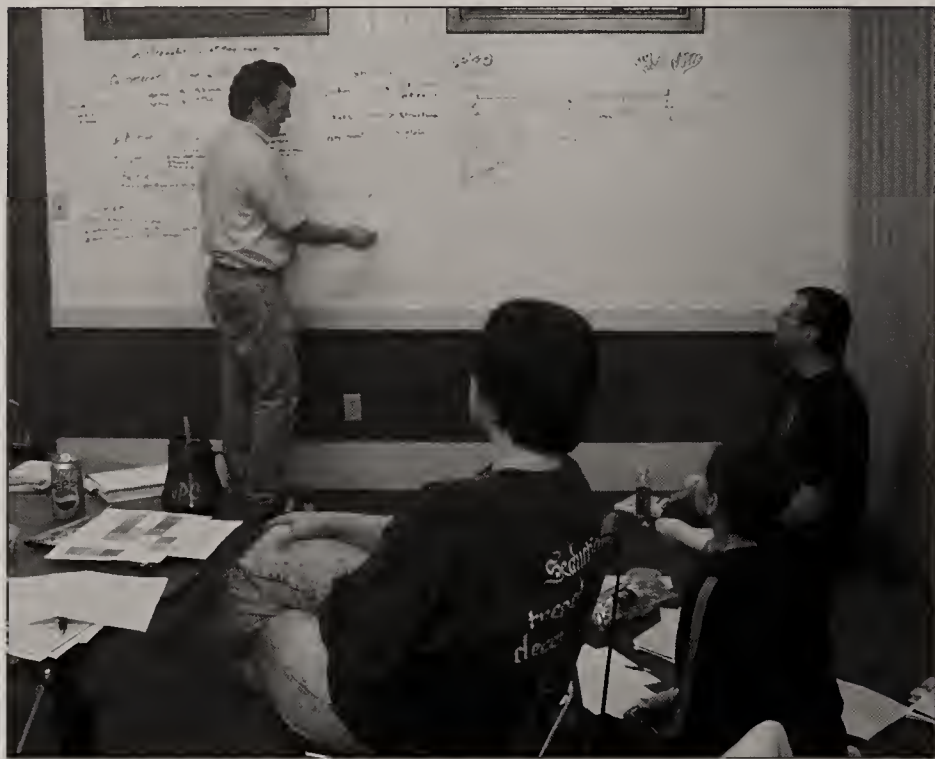
"Work complexity is wasting up to two hours per day, per person, according to Jensen," department member **Brian Dougherty** says. "If that estimate is correct a lot of money is going down the drain. Anything we can do to reduce complexity and improve clarity is going to contribute to the bottom line, not to mention make life much easier."

This program has given the department a better view of its efficiency in three ways. First, "How are we better preparing ourselves to use our colleagues' time?" is an excellent starting point.

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Second, focusing on strengths makes the best use of each member's talents throughout the course of a project or event. Third, for efficient communication, being clear on what needs to be communicated is as important as the actual act of communicating itself.



Communications team working hard at retreat.

The program provided the six Communications staff members with a better understanding of resources available in the department, and specific tools to use in communicating with others. Staff also gained a better perspective on how they work together.

Finally, it doesn't take a day away from the office and this much preparation to get clear on strengths and simplicity. The department compressed a lot of time in their program, but any part of this process offers insights that would allow a group or department work more efficiently. **Scott Blome**, department head says, "The StrengthsFinder alone gives a great foundation for helping us know who does what best and when it can be done."

More information can be found in *Now Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., and *Simplicity* by Bill Jensen.



Reducing Waste

Nancy Lacewell, Public Affairs

In any manufacturing process a certain amount of waste is generated. It is inevitable. Machines can break causing mistakes, and errors can occur due to undetected design flaws, insufficient staff training, or simple misunderstandings.

Whatever the reason, waste costs money. The APH manufacturing budget includes a dollar amount for waste each year. As a part of continuing efforts to improve efficiency and reduce costs, APH management has recently established a work group called the Waste Review Task Force. When a manufacturing process generates an unusually large amount of waste, this group will convene to determine what problem(s) occurred along the way to create the waste, and what changes can be made to prevent the same thing from happening again.

Don Keefe, Vice President of Development, convenes and facilitates this group. Current members are: **Jack Decker** and **Steve Paris** (Production), **Tony Grantz** (Business), **Frank Hayden** (Technical Research), **Lee Wickenheiser** (Cost), and **Arthur Vaughn** (Human Resources).

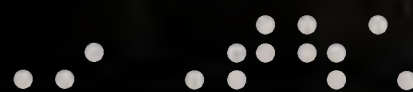
"The purpose of this group is not to 'point fingers' or 'assign blame,'" explains Don. "Our task is to determine what happened when too much waste is created during a manufacturing or production process, and to recommend changes so that the same mistake(s) won't occur again. The company will clearly benefit from the work of this task force, and it is our hope that eventually everyone at APH will benefit from these efforts – once we are able to calculate savings and add them to the Continuous Improvement annual totals."





Featured Employee:

Steve Mullins



Leigh Miller, Public Affairs Intern

Many APH employees were able to guess that **Steve Mullins** is the Featured Employee in this issue of *In Touch*. However, not many know why the semi-colon is his favorite punctuation mark. He explains, “The semi-colon joins two independent clauses into one idea. Synthesis.”



Lucky for Steve, combining separate elements to form a coherent whole is a vital aspect of his work at APH. Steve is

the Special Projects Manager in the Productions Department. Among his various tasks, Steve oversees the mastering process that prepares recordings for duplication. He helped to adapt the department when it became digital, and he is also currently working with the Braillo area.

Steve “grew up” in Atlanta, Georgia. Around the time of Junior High School, he moved to Charlestown, Indiana. He attended Indiana University and majored in English. Steve met his wife Susan when she was a librarian in Charlestown. The two have been married for 15 years.

It was also during his college career that Steve became aware of APH. He was able to combine his knowledge of the English language and his

interest in books to become a proof-reader. Eventually Steve became a monitor, then the head monitor, and then the assistant studio director.

His supervisor, **Jack Decker**, Vice President of Production, gave Steve the responsibility of projects

such as helping to deal with braille backorders and managing the studio renovation. Steve proved, as Jack Decker described, “not to be afraid of taking on new challenges.”

Outside of work, Steve enjoys playing his guitar. He taught himself how to play at the age of 12. He admits, “I have no musical ability and I intend to use it!” Steve primarily plays Beatles’ songs. He wishes he could go back in time to London, to enjoy the days of the Beatles.

Steve feels that today’s biggest challenge to APH is competition, and hopes APH will continue to push forward. Steve realizes the unique stance of the APH upper management. Unlike other corporations, APH managers openly solicit employee ideas. Like a semi-colon, it is the synthesis of all of these ideas that makes APH an innovative and coherent whole.



Steve Mullins playing with Queenie and Sandy, the friendly neighborhood dogs.

First to guess that **Steve Mullins** is the Featured Employee in this issue were: **Marilyn Cheatham** (Human Resources), the entire **ATIC Department**, **Alice Barnes** (Development), **Malcolm Turner** (Communications), **Martha Coy** (Housekeeping),

Lynn Smith (Maintenance), and the entire **Braille Transcription Department**.

Lou Harpenau (Studio) guessed that it was either **Duane Eddy**, **Jimi Hendrix**, or **Steve Mullins** – he wasn’t quite sure!



The In Touch Bulletin Board

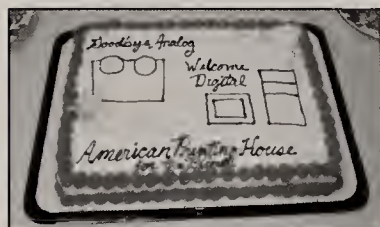
Welcome new employees! **Michael Flood** (Braille Production), and **Leigh Miller** (Public Affairs).

Congratulations to **Barry Bernson** (Studio), who recently won an Alexander Scourby Award from AFB. He won in the nonfiction category and was honored at a ceremony in New York City on June 9. Barry has recorded over 300 books during his years with APH. *You make us proud, Barry!*

On March 31, the Talking Book Studio celebrated the conversion of its 11 studios from analog to digital recording. **Betty Atcher** (widow of **Randy Atcher**, longtime APH narrator) and **Tuck Tinsley** cut the "ribbon" (or recording tape) to open the fully digital APH Talking Book Studios. During a brief celebration, many APH staff members



were thanked for their tireless work on this project, which significantly improves APH recording quality and capability.



Congratulations to **Lou Tingle** (Product Repair) on the birth of his first grandchild. **Cyana Layne Tingle** was born on April 27 and weighed 6 lbs. 13 oz.



Bill Beavin, Vice President of Finance, spoke at an employee celebration on March 31

to recognize that the APH 401(k) Plan reached the \$3 million level in contributions. Bill congratulated all APH employees participating in this program for their commitment to financial planning for retirement. If you would like information on joining the 401(k) Plan, contact **Theresa Close** (Finance) at ext. 271.

A picnic was held on May 28 at Sawyer Park to celebrate **Christine Anderson's** accomplishments as Director of Resource Services and her new role as Special Project Consultant. Christine will now be home taking care of daughter **Kyra** (pictured with her mom at the picnic), and will work part-time for APH to strengthen the Louis Database and APH relationships with textbook publishers. *Best wishes from all of us, Christine!*



Congratulations to **Tristan Pierce** (Educational Research), coach of the KSB swim team. The girls won their Conference Championship this spring, and the boys placed fourth (with only 5 boys – and 1 a beginning swimmer). *Great job, Tristan. They couldn't have done it without you!*

Send Us Your News for the Next Issue!



Maria Delgado (Advisory Services) conducted 24 workshops this spring with Girl Scout troops throughout the area. The teacher who organized the workshops wrote to thank Maria and Dave, "Thank you so much for helping with my Girl Scout Gold Award Project – the disability awareness workshops. You brought so much insight for the children... and they were so excited

to meet Dave. ... I hope that the kids will truly be more open to and caring towards those with disabilities. It was so kind of you to give your time to assist me. I could not have done the project without the adult volunteers – especially you."

Congratulations on a job well done, Maria!



APH Traveling Museum Exhibit Wins Award

The series of four traveling exhibitions, *In Touch with Knowledge*, a series of four traveling exhibitions from the APH Callahan Museum, received an Award of Merit at the Kentucky History Awards ceremony held in Frankfort in March.

Carol Tobe, Museum Director, accepted the award, which was given to "projects of outstanding quality that can serve as a statewide or national model." The exhibitions, focusing on the history of the education of blind people, cover the following topics: Reading and Writing, Science, Geography, and Mathematics. *Congratulations to Carol Tobe and the Marie and Eugene Callahan Museum of APH.*



APH Employees STRIKE again!

Jane Thompson, ATIC

The passion of working toward achieving our mission goes beyond the regular workweek for many APH staff.

On March 16, 2003, APH staff joined forces with the bowlers of the St. Matthews Lions Club to raise money to provide free services to elderly blind and visually impaired residents of Kentucky.

The APH bowlers this year raised a *striking* \$1,000! Bowlers collected donations from co-workers, family, and friends, and also gave generously themselves.

The 2003 APH Bowlers included: **Jane Thompson** (ATIC); **Jan Carroll** (high series 503) and **Doug Trent** (Business); **Mario Eiland** (Technical Research), **JoAnn Hardesty**

(CTS); **Alice Barnes** (Development); **Jody Bachmann** (Finance); **B.J. Acra**, **Vicki Judd**, **Lonnie Carnes**, **Jennifer Mullikin**, **Joyce Enteman**, **Barbara Rodgers**, and **Gail Pryor** (Tape Duplication). Friends and family of employees on the team were: **Wendy Hammond**, **David Hammond**, **Jeanne Kaelin** (high game 187), **Barbara Weatherford** (mother of B.J. Acra and former APH employee in Development).

Thanks to everyone who gave time, money, energy and enthusiasm for this very worthwhile fund raising event!

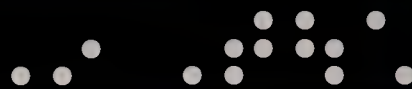


Alice Barnes
(Development)
bowls another strike!





We Welcome the Following Customer Comments




Rosanne Broome, Customer Relations

- A customer writes...

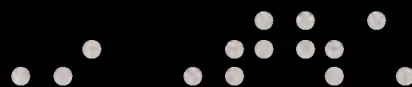
“I would just like to point out that your four-track tape recorders are the best and have been so for a very long time – at least since I started using them in the 1980s.”

- Visit the APH website to hear a raving review of APH’s Studio Recorder. Go to www.aph.org/tech/sr_info. Scroll down and click on “Play Audio Overview.” The review was broadcast by Jonathan Molson on ACB Radio. *Congratulations **Larry Skutchan** (Technical Research) and your team of technology experts!*

- A customer called **Fred Gissoni** (Customer Relations) in late May to pass on a good word regarding our “very nice repair person.” She said, “Stacy was so attentive to my problem and really acted as though she cared. I was really pleased with the service I received.” *Thanks for the great work, **Stacy Calvert**, repair order entry representative. How we talk and listen to our customers really does matter!* 



Featured Employee: Next Issue



Who is this? Some “helpful” clues ...



- She is a gardener, a cook, and a painter.
- She’s been with APH for more than 3 years, but less than 19.
- She volunteers for a grassroots environmental organization.
- Her house was once featured in *The Courier-Journal*.
- She is a grandmother who shops on e-bay and collects old stuff.



In Touch ..

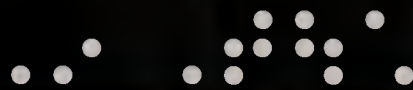
Production Staff: **Gary Mudd**, **Nancy Lacewell**, and **Becky Snider** (Public Affairs)

Scott Blome and **Bridgett Johnson** (Communications)

Distribution Manager: **Becky Snider** (895-2405 ext. 356)



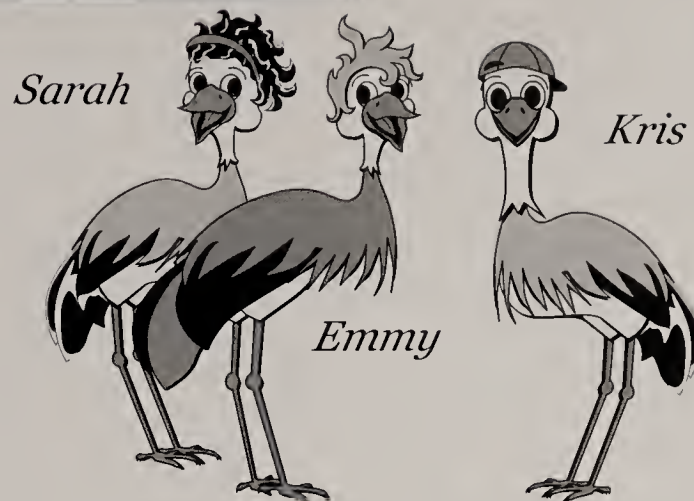
Product Spotlight ENVISION



Elaine Kitchel, *Educational Research*

A fun new product from APH, the ENVISION training program, uses stories, puppets and activities with Emmy the Emu and other high-interest characters to teach students to use optical devices. It covers skills that students need to function in their everyday lives, and includes magnifiers, telescopes, and materials to view through these devices.

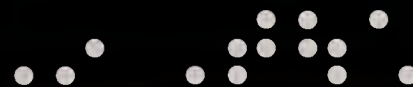
There are two separate ENVISION programs, with each divided into materials for younger and older students. One program is for using distance devices (telescopes), and the other is for near devices (magnifiers.) All in all, ENVISION required the development of 11 different catalog items.



Elaine Kitchel and **Kristopher Scott** (Educational Research), **Bernie Mudd** (Communications), and **Darlene Donhoff** (Technical Research) developed the materials, graphics, characters and specifications, but nearly everyone at APH had a hand in making ENVISION become a reality. Everyone involved did a wonderful job. So, it's good to know the product is being well received and looks as if it will be a good seller.



Continuous Improvement Corner



Arthur Vaughn, *Human Resources*

A customer notified APH on May 6th that she had experienced difficulty in removing the sticky residue left behind when removing the clear plastic tape from two Paper Folding Jigs they had purchased.

Rosanne Broome (Customer Relations) suggested that we look into this problem. After testing 15 units from stock, it was determined that the 3" clear tape used to hold down the tongue was hard to remove without leaving the glue behind. The purpose for the tape was simply to hold down the tongue during shipment. Once the problem was identified the tape was replaced by a piece of cardboard packing material.

Steve Paris (Production) and **Betty Jean Reece** (Educational Aids) helped create the new packing method, and the Shipping and Receiving



Rhonda Schaefer (c) instructs **Margie Cosby**, **Michelle Alexander** and **Flora Long** (l-r) (all with Shipping and Receiving) on her "special" tape removal technique.

Department reworked the 166 units in stock. **David Hines** (Engineering) changed the bill of material for future reference.

Our customer is getting replacements and this whole process was completed on May 12th. Now that is service!



Employee

Birthdays



July

2 Lee Jones
3 Elizabeth Hill
9 William Randall
10 Carl Shultz
Inge Formenti
Roberta Williams
11 Joy Robinson
13 Martha Coogle
15 Kathryn Coddington
17 Doug Trent
Karen Poppe
18 Nancy Lacewell
Ted Zinious
19 Carol Rothenberg
20 Ruth Wohner
22 Janet Boyd
Kathy Peak
Suzette Wright
25 Jodi Hubbard
Kerry Cundiff
26 David McGee

Steve Paris
28 Scott Parris
Maria Delgado
30 Robin Cook
Joan Goodgine
Fredric Morehouse
Tuck Tinsley
31 Tiffiany Collier

August

1 Jody Bachmann
3 Andrea Herron
4 Jack Wallen
Betsy Burnham
5 Darick Chamberlin
6 Tracy Ogan
7 Tony Grantz
8 Janet Brown
9 John Ashby
13 Tessa Wright
Barry Bernson

14 Elaine Evans
17 Margaret Nix
Yan Zhang
18 Michael Horton
Gertrude Tyler
19 Debra Harrison
20 Sandra Allen
Lee Look
21 Terea Bethel
Jaime McMahan
Cary Crumpton
26 Jayma Hawkins
28 Linda Brown
Paul Harpenau
Terry Terlau

September

1 Lonnie Carnes
Michael Hardin
Lee Wickenheiser
4 George Williams

5 Tim Mackison
6 Silver Bryant
8 Michael Druin
Betty Hardin
10 Brian Dougherty
15 Jill Fox
16 Bonnie Zurschmeide
Perry Garner
Rhonda Schaefer
Bruce Huntley
19 Bill Beavin
20 Valerie Cox
21 Stacy Calvert
22 Kathryn Sanders
23 Deborah Timmel
Bettie Cox
24 Erin Johnson
25 Gage Brogan
Terri Coleman
27 Kathy Smiddy
Butch Hoover
Gary Mudd
30 Robert Steffen



In Touch .. .

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